

Pickering Town Council

# *Annual Report*

1 April 2017 - 31 March 2018

**Memorial Hall  
Potter Hill  
Pickering  
North Yorkshire  
YO18 8AA**

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## Introduction

My year as Town Mayor has been both interesting and challenging in equal measure. It has been a pleasure to meet so many people who live in the town and from the many voluntary organisations - without which many of the services and events that we have come to rely on simply would not take place.

I have attended many events on behalf of Pickering, and I am told that I am the first ever person to have been successful at “Splat the Rat” at the Lions’ fundraising event last summer. A very proud achievement! I have joined in with a morning of singing with Musical Memories at the RVS centre, was in awe of the size and quality of the produce displayed at Pickering Horticultural Society’s annual prize giving and it was a very proud moment indeed to be able to join the procession of veterans at the Remembrance Service in November.

The Council recognised at the beginning of the last financial year the need to provide additional financial support to our many voluntary organisations and as a result increased its grants budget from £8000.00 to £15500.00. There is always room for more volunteers in many of these groups and I am sure they would be pleased to hear from you.

Progress to complete the work programme for the land off Whitby Road which will eventually become our Community Park, continues to be frustratingly slow; however, we are getting ever closer and are currently working towards August 2018 as the handover date.

Pickering is faced with two significant residential developments and these are going through the planning process at the moment, if they are approved, they will have a significant impact on the services and infrastructure of our town. The council is working with the District Council to ensure the best possible solutions for Pickering.

Finally, we said goodbye to three councillors: Emma Richardson, Tommy Woodward and Eileen Randall. We are grateful for their commitment to Pickering people. We have welcomed two new councillors, Neil Armstrong and Paul Littlewood. At the time of writing there is a vacancy on the council to be filled.

Below is a summary of the council’s activities during the past year.

### 1. Communication and consultation

We have tried to keep you informed by publishing, “posts” on our website and through our facebook page.

We also advertise our meetings and send agendas to the press to encourage them to attend so that our discussions and decisions can be reported. Notices advertising council meetings and the annual town meeting are posted on our notice boards as well as on our website. And we encourage you to talk to us by allocating time in our meetings to listen and respond to your views on current issues. Should you wish the council to discuss an issue of concern to you, please contact the town clerk by the second Tuesday of each month by ringing (01751) 476503 or e-mailing townclerk@pickering.gov.uk.

We have undertaken a review of the seven play areas for which the council is responsible. To that end we have listened to parents and children and have based our play area project for 2018-19 on their views. Our intention is to install a picnic table at Manor Drive and a second picnic table at Hawthorn Lane to encourage families to visit these amenities. To add to childrens’ enjoyment of Hawthorn Lane, two new pieces of equipment will be installed in late summer or the autumn. We have decided

to focus resources on the more northerly of the play areas for small children in the Kingfisher Drive estate. Ageing equipment will be removed from Otter Drive and Troutbeck Close and a new multiplay and swings will be installed, again in late summer or the autumn.

2. Voluntary groups

We have, through our grants policy, supported a number of groups whose activities benefit Pickering people in quite different ways. A small grant was given to the British Isles Rose Society to support its rose festival at Roger’s Nursery – an annual event which not only delights many local people but attracts visitors to our town. Grants were also given to the Musical Memories Community Interest Company (working with those suffering from dementia), Pickering in Business to help meet the cost of Christmas Lights, and to the trustees of the Memorial Hall to install a defibrillator in the building. The full list is given below.

Allotments Association	£250.00
British Isles Rose Society	£100.00
Christmas Lights	£1000.00
Citizens Advice Bureau	£150.00
Memorial Hall	£567.40
Moorsbus CIC	£400.00
Musical Memories CIC	£250.00
Newbridge Park Ltd	£1500.00
Next Steps Mental Health Resource	£1000.00
Pickering Cricket Club	£500.00
Pickering Home School Association (Infants and Nursery)	£1000.00
Pickering in Business	£1329.26
Senior Citizens Christmas Party	£400.00

The council also allocated £5000.00 to which the Environment Agency can apply to help meet the annual maintenance cost of the flood alleviation bund in lower Newton Dale. The measures undertaken to give Pickering a strong measure of protection were effectively tested in March.

Details of the council’s grant scheme can be found on [www.pickering.gov.uk](http://www.pickering.gov.uk) or by contacting town clerk.

We will also support groups, organisations and authorities whose activities benefit Pickering’s residents should they be looking for volunteers to sustain their work. The support would take the form of publishing contact details on the council’s website and notice boards. We have installed a notice board in the Market Place for community groups to advertise their activities. (To this end we are very grateful to the Pickering Pharmacy for allowing us to mount the board to the front of its premises.)

3. Engagement with the town’s young people

Pickering Town Youth Council started the year well by collecting an enormous amount of food for the Foodbank as an inter-house competition at Lady Lumley’s School. The Foodbank organisers were delighted and issued each house with a certificate.

The annual general meeting was well attended and the young people decided to rename the group “Pickering Town Youth” as they thought this might attract more members.

The group continues to be a member of North Yorkshire Youth and is currently planning a competition to design a banner in order to promote itself to other youth groups.

#### 4. Services

We have worked hard to ensure that the amenities for which we are responsible have looked attractive and any risks to users managed: the council’s footway lighting contractor and ROSPA have, respectively, inspected the footway lighting units and the play area equipment. As a result fifteen lighting units have been replaced. As year succeeds year, more old stock will be replaced. This coming year, the bracket lights in Ingsarth and reinforced concrete columns in Train Lane, Firthland Road and Anchorite Lane will be replaced until all the units for which we are responsible are made of galvanised steel and carry LED lights. All units that have been replaced are now numbered and have information attached which gives contact details for members of the public to report faulty mechanisms. Following the Rospa report, the climbing frame in Troutbeck Close was removed and the multiplay in Otter Drive will be removed. Further advice led to the removal of the seesaw in Manor Drive and will lead to the removal of the springer and swings in Otter Drive. The aerial runway in Manor Drive, despite early teething problems, has proved very popular.

There has been some surgery to trees and some trees have been felled. Many of you, in walking through the front churchyard (for which the council is responsible) will have seen that the yews have been trimmed back and a lime was felled to let in more light.

Apart from seven play areas and some of the footway lighting units in the town, we are responsible for Riverside Walk and the open space on Smiddy Hill, the cemetery at Whitby Road, the litter and dog litter bins, and public seats in the town. We are grateful to members of the public who suggest how services can be improved and for alerting us when repairs are necessary.

It is understandable that with several local government authorities operating in Pickering, members of the public become confused as to which authority is responsible for which service: for example, lighting units, depending on their location, are either the responsibility of the county council or the town council or the district council or the Yorkshire Housing Association. The verges are part of the highway and, therefore, are the responsibility of the county council; however, the town council cuts the verges. Should you be unclear as to which authority should deal with a particular issue, the council’s employees are always happy to listen and provide the appropriate contact details.

We remain grateful to those Pickering people who lock and unlock the play areas and report problems when they occur, help clear up litter in the town every month, and tidy the cemetery.

5. The Community Park, Whitby Road

We expected to take on the responsibility for the community park in 2017; however, the land remains in the ownership of David Wilson Homes, the company which developed Woodlands Park. We are working towards handover this year but a number of issues await resolution, examples include further work on drainage, and laying out. On our part, we have ordered seats and picnic tables. This furniture, made of recycled material, will be installed as soon as possible after handover. And we have appointed an arboriculturist to draw up a tree planting scheme and, should handover take place before the back end of the year, it is hoped that the first phase of planting can take achieved.

The park will provide a welcome addition to the town's amenities but it would be misleading to say that the amenity will be up and running within a few months of handover. We still hold to the statement that we made last year: the development of the park will be work in progress for many years and that is every bit true today.

6. Lobbying

One of the roles of the council is represent the community in its dealings with other authorities and organisations. To this end the council has continued its membership of the Ryedale Market Towns Promotion Partnership primarily to ensure that Ryedale remains a popular destination for visitors and that they stay longer and spend more.

In Pickering we have wonderful tourist attractions – the North Yorkshire Moors Railway, the parish church and Beck Isle Museum are but three that come to mind. And our attractions work hard to encourage visitors; however, we can't rest on our laurels and we hope that the work of the partnership together with the enthusiasm and commitment shown by Pickering in Business will help ensure that our economy continues to benefit from visitors.

We have lobbied the county council about the state of the roads but also to come up with a scheme to ease the movement of traffic along the Westgate stretch of the A170. The combination of articulated lorries and on street parking does not make for ease of movement. One solution might be for the county council to remove part of the verge and install grasscrete along the southern side of the highway. This would give enough space to drivers moving eastwards and westwards to pass each other safely and reduce the risk of damage to the offside of parked vehicles.

Finally, the construction of new homes to meet the town's target of 750 properties by 2027 continues to cause unease partly because of the pressure on services especially medical provision but also the demands on drivers because of busy and crowded streets. The council continues to remind the district council about these pressures.

Best wishes to you all.

Helene Haythorne  
Town Mayor 2017-18

Accounting statements for 2017-18 (compared with the two previous years)

	Year ending		
	31 March 2016 £	31 March 2017 £	31 March 2018 £
Balances brought forward	230,264	265807	309936
(+) Annual precept	156,000	168000	181000
(+) Total other receipts	17,125	15756	15691
(-) Staff costs	52,515	52606	53202
(-) All other payments	85,067	87021	91532
Balances carried forward	265,807	309936	361893
Total fixed assets	252,531	262407	262595

Most of the council's income came from the precept, a sum of money which was built into the Council Tax. The balance came from, chiefly, two sources: cemetery fees and a contribution from North Yorkshire County Council towards the cost of cutting the town's verges. The amount expended during the financial year goes on a range of services and amenities and the administrative costs to meet these as well as the council's representative role. The services and amenities include the cemetery in Whitby Road, Riverside Walk and the open space at Smiddy Hill, the maintenance and inspection of seven play areas, cutting 44000 square metres of verge, the maintenance of public seats and litter bins, and the maintenance of some of the town's footway lighting.

The council's accounts are subject to internal and external audit regimes. The internal auditor is appointed by the council and has to meet tests of independence and competence. The internal audit, on the basis of assessment of risk, carries out a selective assessment of compliance with relevant procedures and controls that are in operation during the financial year. The exercise is undertaken each autumn and, again, after the finalisation of the accounts.

The council will soon submit a return to the external auditor. This includes a statement that the councillors acknowledge their responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control as well as the accounting statements for 2017-2018. Notices of public rights and the publication of the unaudited return will be posted on the council notice boards and on its website on 3 June 2017.

Should you have any queries about anything in this report, please contact the town clerk.

## Contact details for town councillors

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To contact the Town Clerk, or his assistant, please ring (01751) 476503, e-mail townclerk@pickering.gov.uk or call in at the office which is open Monday to Friday inclusive, 9am until 12 noon. The office is housed in the Kitching Room which is situated on the first floor of the Memorial Hall Potter Hill, Pickering, YO18 8AA. There is a lift on the ground floor for those who do not want to negotiate the stairs.